

## **C/Lt Col David R. Lotarski, CAP**

Name: Lotarski, David R.

Grade: C/Lt Col

Unit: Pershing Squadron 11211, Stickney, IL

Date of Death: 18 Jul 1980

Date of Interment: 22 Jul 1980

Place of Residence at Death: 1514 Clarence Avenue, Berwyn, Cook County, IL

Place of Death: Coles County Airport, 432 Airport Road, Mattoon, Coles County, IL

Place of Interment: Mount Auburn Cemetery, Elmwood Lawn Crypt, Lot 5C, Grave 14, 4101 S. Oak Park Avenue, Stickney, Cook County, IL



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# *Broken safety belt eyed in Coles airport mishap*

MATTOON — A broken safety belt hooking mechanism may have caused the death of a Berwyn boy.

David Lotarski, 16, fell to his death from an "ultra light aircraft" Friday at Coles County Airport.

Lotarski was pronounced dead at 9:29 a.m. upon arrival at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center.

Coles County Coroner Dick Lynch said Lotarski fell approximately 20 feet, landing on his back and suffering severe damage to his internal organs.

Lotarski, a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) cadet, was on a training flight in a CAP single-wing craft, which is reportedly similar to a hang glider.

Lynch said the plastic seat belt mechanism broke during "porpoising" action by the craft — the craft was going up and down in the air in a manner similar

to that of a porpoise leaping in and out of the water.

Lynch said Lotarski's aircraft was being towed by a car just prior to the accident and was about 40 feet in the air. He said that just after the operators of the car released the tow line to enable Lotarski to stabilize the aircraft, it turned over, nose first. At some point during the downward turn Lotarski fell from the craft.

The youth fell to the grass alongside a runway on the east side of the airport at 8:45 a.m. A Coles airport fireman and a CAP cadet rushed to Lotarski's side and administered first aid until a hospital ambulance arrived.

Lotarski was taking part in a week-long encampment the CAP holds each summer at the airport.

Mike Covalt, airport manager, said the

accident was the first in the 15 years the CAP has held camp at Coles County Airport.

Cadets are given instruction in flying gliders, powered fix-wing aircraft and hot-air balloons.

Covalt said this was the first year the camp had offered instruction in flying ultra-light aircraft. The small glider which Lotarski was flying had a tubular frame which allows the pilot to sit in the craft.

Lynch said that type of aircraft is not subject to Federal Aviation Administration regulations. He added that approximately 100 people have been killed in the United States in the last two years in accidents involving such ultra-light aircraft.

An inquest into Lotarski's death will be held.

# *Berwyn boy dies in plane mishap*

A 16-year-old Berwyn boy died Friday after falling 20 feet when the light airplane he was in flipped over.

The youth, David R. Lotarski, a Civil Air Patrol officer was participating in a week-long camp held annually by the group in Mattoon.

The aircraft was being towed by a car at Coles County Airport when it was cut loose, apparently turned over nose first, causing the youth to fall to his death. The accident is under investigation.

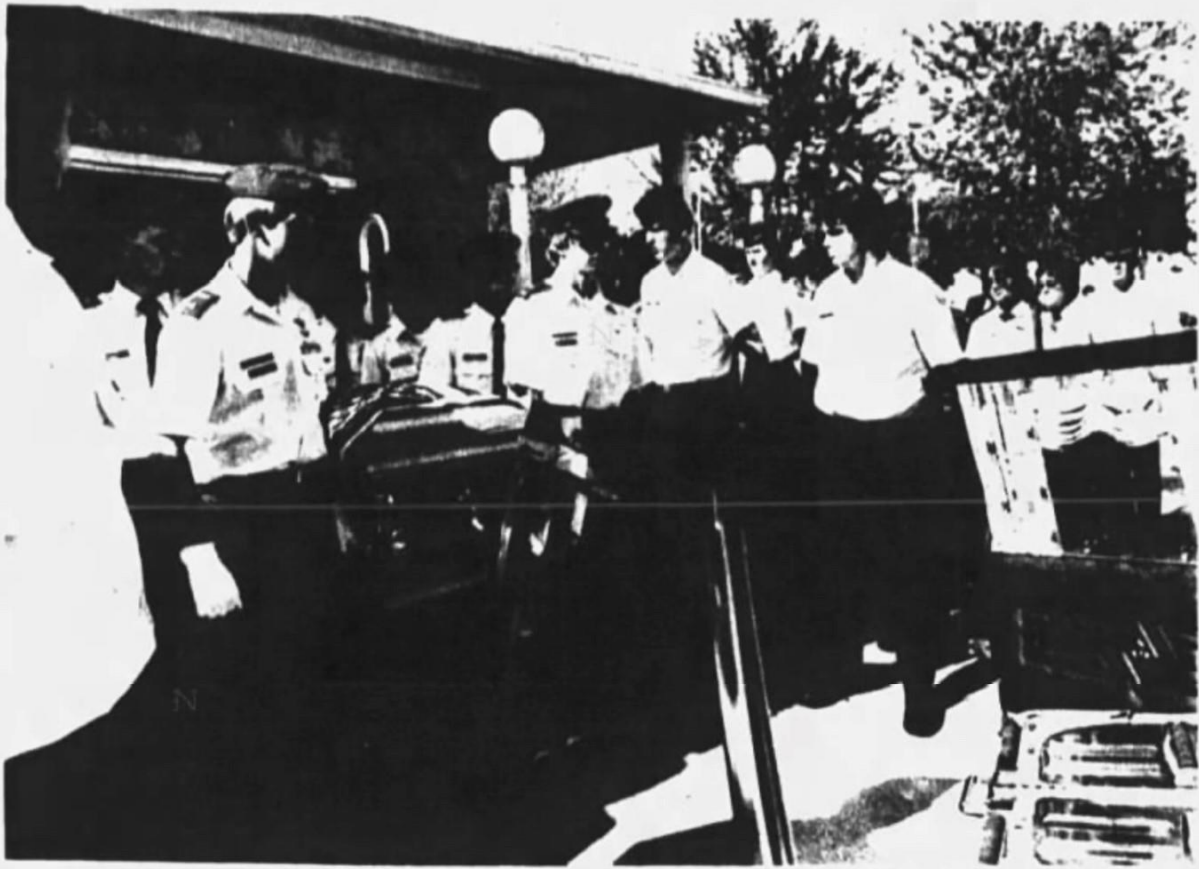
Services were held yesterday at Joseph Nosek and Sons Funeral Home in Berwyn, followed by a Mass in

St. Mary of Celle Church. Interment was in a family lot.

A lifetime Berwyn resident, he was a lieutenant colonel in the Pershing Squad, Civil Air Patrol, headquartered in Stickney and belonged to the St. Mary of Celle Holy Name Society.

He was going into his senior year at Morton West High School where he belonged to the National Honor Society, track team, and was the sports editor of the Talon yearbook.

He is survived by his parents Joseph and Caroline; brother Donald; and grandmother Olga A. Kleczka.



LIFE photo by Myles Van Cura

## *Honor guard*

The body of **David R. Lotarski**, 16, a lieutenant colonel in the Civil Air Patrol, is escorted into a funeral car by an honor guard of his group, Pershing Squad, headquartered in Stickney, from Joseph Nosek and Son Funeral Home where he was waked earlier this week. The Berwyn youth, an honor stu-

dent at Morton West High School, was killed July 18 at a CAP camp in Mattoon when his light airplane flipped over and he fell 20 feet to the ground. The youth also belonged to the track team and was sports editor of the Talon yearbook.





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Beloved Son

C/LT COL. David R. Lotarski

CIVIL AIR PATROL